

Message Text

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15

ACTION EB-07

INFO OCT-01 NEA-06 ISO-00 CAB-02 CIAE-00 COME-00 DODE-00

DOT-00 INR-07 NSAE-00 RSC-01 FAA-00 LAB-04 SIL-01

SS-15 NSC-05 NSCE-00 SSO-00 USIE-00 INRE-00 L-02

TRSE-00 OMB-01 /052 W

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FM AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 5040

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: ELAB, ETRAN, IS

SUBJ: EL AL GROUNDS ALL FLIGHTS DUE SLOW-DOWN

BY MAINTENANCE WORKERS

1. ALL EL AL FLIGHTS GROUNDED DECEMBER 27 FOR FIRST TIME IN HISTORY OF STATE, DUE TO SLOW-DOWN STAGED BY SOME 600 MAINTENANCE WORKERS DURING PAST THREE DAYS WHICH CAUSED SERIOUS DISRUPTIONS IN FLIGHT SCHEDULES. SLOW-DOWN BEGAN DECEMBER 24 WHEN DISPUTE WITH MANAGEMENT OVER DEMAND BY MAINTENANCE WORKERS FOR AUTOMATIC PROGRESSIONS IN PAY SCALE REACHED DEADLOCK. MANAGEMENT DECISION, APPROVED BY GOI, ANNOUNCED MIDNIGHT FOLLOWING REFUSAL OF WORKS COMMITTEE TO SIGN STATEMENT THAT WORKERS WOULD RETURN TO NORMAL WORK STANDARDS. WORKS COMMITTEE DENIED THAT THEY WERE ENGAGED IN SLOW-DOWN AND CLAIMED HEAVY SEASONAL WORKLOAD AND SHORTAGE OF MAINTENANCE WORKERS WERE PRINCIPAL FACTORS CONTRIBUTING TO DELAYS IN FLIGHT DEPARTURES. MANAGEMENT, GOVERNMENT AND SENIOR HISTADRUT OFFICIALS NOW MEETING IN EFFORT TO RESOLVE DISPUTE. MEANWHILE EL AL IS TRANSFERRING

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PASSENGERS AND CARGO TO OTHER CARRIERS.

2. COMMENT: ILLEGAL STRIKES AND SLOWDOWNS BY MAINTENANCE WORKERS HAVE LONG BEEN SOURCE OF SERIOUS TROUBLE FOR EL AL. IN PAST MANAGEMENT SOUGHT TO RESOLVE THESE DISPUTES BY CONCESSIONS OR LEGAL MEASURES. DECISION TO GROUND FLIGHTS MARKS PRECEDENT IN HISTORY OF EL AL. INABILITY OF COMPANY TO MAINTAIN SCHEDULES IN FACE OF THREATENED CONTINUED SLOWDOWN BY MAINTENANCE WORKERS PERHAPS MADE DECISION INEVITABLE. HOWEVER, IT REFLECTS FIRM LINE EL AL AND GOI EVIDENTLY INTEND TO TAKE IN DEALING WITH ILLEGAL WORK DISRUPTIONS, PARTICULARLY IN ESSENTIAL SERVICES, AND WAGE DEMANDS THAT EXCEED ESTABLISHED HISTADRUT AND GOVERNMENT WAGE POLICY. ACTION OF MAINTENANCE WORKERS, COMING AT TIME OF SERIOUS ECONOMIC PROBLEMS IN ISRAEL, HAS BEEN UNIVERSALLY CONDEMNED BY PRESS AS TOTALLY IRRESPONSIBLE CONDUCT AND DENOUNCED BY HISTADRUT.
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Message Attributes

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